

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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SUBJECT: CONTINUED TURKISH MEDIA REACTION TO AID CUTOFF

REF: ANKARA 1117

1. AS IT AS SINCE FEBRUARY 5, THE CUT-OFF OF U.S. MILITARY AID TO TURKEY FORMED THE CENTRAL FACT OF THE MAIN STORIES IN THE TURKISH MEDIA WEDNESDAY (FEB. 12). SEVERAL WEDNESDAY EDITIONS GAVE TOP FRONT PAGE PLAY TO LEAKED REPORTS OF THE CONTENTS OF A FOREIGN OFFICE NOTE DELIVERED MONDAY NIGHT TO AMBASSADOR MACOMBER. MANY PAPERS ALSO GAVE FRONT PAGE PLAY TO THE PRESS CONFERENCE TUESDAY AT WHICH SULEYMAN DEMIREL CAUTIONED AGAINST A PRECIPITOUS DEPARTURE FROM NATO. (SEE SEPTTEL). STATE TELEVISION IN ITS MAIN EVENING NEWS BROADCAST TUESDAY GAVE
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TOP PLAY TO A MEETING MONDAY AND TUESDAY OF THE TURKISH

NATIONAL
SECURITY COUNCIL AT WHICH THE AID CUT WAS
DISCUSSED.

2. IN OTHER CYPRUS-RELATED STORIES WEDNESDAY, SEVERAL PAPERS, INCLUDING MILLIYET, CUMHURIYET AND SON HAVADIS, GAVE FRONT PAGE PLAY TO DETAILED REPORTS OF THE GREEK CYPRIOT PROPOSALS FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT ON THE ISLAND. ACCORDING TO CUMHURIYET, TURKISH OFFICIALS' INITIAL REACTION TO THE PROPOSALS WAS NEGATIVE.

3. WIDESPREAD EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE MEANING OF THE AID CUT-OFF AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TURKEY SHOULD CONFRONT IT CONTINUED UNABATED IN WEDNESDAY EDITIONS. SINCE THE AID CUT-OFF, EDITORIALISTS ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM HAVE ANGRILY CONDEMNED THE U.S. -- AND ESPECIALLY THE U.S. CONGRESS. SIMILARLY, THERE HAS BEEN GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT THE CUT-OFF REPRESENTED A MAJOR WATERSHED IN TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS. HOWEVER, THERE HAS EMERGED CONSIDERABLE DIVERGENCE IN EDITORIAL POSITIONS AS TO HOW TURKEY SHOULD REACT TO THE EVENT. THIS DIVERGENCE LARGELY FOLLOWS THE LINES OF POLITICAL PARTY ORIENTATION. (SEE ANKARA 1181).

4. ON THE FAR LEFT OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, COMMENTATORS IN CUMHURIYET AND YENI ORTAM HAVE MAINLY URGED THAT TURKEY SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM NATO INsofar AS SHE NO LONGER GAINS ANY BENEFITS, AND RUNS GREAT RISKS BY REMAINING IN THE ALLIANCE.

5. ON THE RIGHT, PAPERS SUCH AS HURRIYET AND TERCUMAN HAVE EXPRESSED INDIGNATION AT THE CUT-OFF AND ASSERTED THAT RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. NOW REQUIRE REVIEW. BUT NONE SO FAR HAS RECOMMENDED THAT TURKEY LEAVE THE NATO ALLIANCE. INDEED, CONSERVATIVE SON HAVADIS IN ITS FEB. 10 EDITION CONDEMNED RPP LEADER BULENT ECEVIT FOR ALLEGEDLY ADVOCATING WITHDRAWAL. SAID SON HAVADIS'S EDITORIAL: "WE MAY DECIDE TO PUL OUT OF NATO BECAUSE OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. BUT MR. ECEVIT'S RECENT REMARKS WERE IN CONTRADICTION TO OUR NATIONAL INTEREST."
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6. AS FOR NEWSPAPERS WHOSE POSITION GENERALLY REFLECTS THE VIEWS OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE RPP, THERE HAS BEEN NO CALL FOR AN IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO. SOME WRITERS, SUCH AS ABDI IPEKCI OF MILLIYET, HAVE URGED A CAUTIOUS TURKISH RESPONSE WITH REPSECT TO BOTH RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND THE CUTOFF'S IMPLICATIONS FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP. EVEN BARIS EDITOR YASAR AYSEV, WHO ADVOCATED

AN IMMEDIATE EXPULSION OF ALL AMERICANS SAVE EMBASSY
PERSONNEL FROM TURKEY, HAS ASSERTED THAT A REVIEW OF
FOREIGN POLICY NEED NOT NECESSARILY LEAD TO A WITHDRAWAL
FROM THE ALLIANCE.
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